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Protecting Missouri's Environment Since 1969

There's been a lot of talk about green jobs, the future of energy and sustainable living these days, as people look to the future and the Missouri that we're going to leave for our children. However, there is one organization that has been having this discussion since 1969: the Missouri Coalition for the Environment (MCE).

On their website, www.moenviron.org, there are three priorities listed: clean water, air quality, and open space. Missouri is fortunate to have an abundance of water and open spaces, including more than 140,000 acres of state parks teeming with wildlife. It is unfortunate that all of these are threatened by man, pollution, and negligence.

According to the MCE, only about 15 percent of Missouri's streams meet the water quality goals established in the 1972 Clean Water Act, and 90 percent of Missouri's 4.5 million acres of wetlands are gone. The MCE fights for water issues locally by calling for the investigation of E. coli bacteria in Kiefer Creak in Castlewood State Park. They are also threatening a lawsuit against the St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District in order to stop raw sewage from flowing into area streams.

The website states that the largest contributors to global warming are coal burning power plants, which produce 85 percent of Missouri's electricity. Missouri has 21 coal-fired power plants, and from 1990 to 2003, Missouri also had the fifth highest carbon dioxide emissions in the country. The MCE encourages renewable energy standards, and was responsible for putting the Clean Energy Initiative on the November 2008 ballot. That measure passed overwhelmingly.

Some 2009 MCE accomplishments:

- Participated in implementation of the Renewable Electricity Standard approved in Proposition C as it progressed through the Public Service Commission rulemaking process.
- Facilitated the genesis of the Missouri Solar Energy Industry Association to promote accreditation, industry standards, and consumer education as the solar market grows.
- Assisted individual citizens and organizations with water quality investigations and defense of our streams and wetlands.
- Advanced water quality standards toward our goal of clean, safe, and healthy Missouri waters.
- Mobilized Missourians to advocate for improved management to preserve the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.
- Elevated awareness of and solutions for decreasing our state's contribution to the pollution causing the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico.

This planet is the one thing everyone has in common. Without people who are passionate about finding new ways to think about issues like renewable energy and water protection, we all will have our planet's demise in common. To find out more about the MCE, visit their website or call 314-727-0600.

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